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NORTH KOREA: A STRATEGIC CHALLENGE

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The 2002 Asian Games marked several historical firsts for Koreans: during the opening ceremonies the North and South Korean teams strode into the Seoul stadium side-by-side wearing the same uniform and carrying a special “Unification” flag (depicting a powder blue outline of the Korean Peninsula on a white background); hundreds of North Korean supporters waved North Korean flags—the first time the flags were permitted to be displayed in South Korea; North Korea’s 300-member cheering squad arrived by ship, the first time a North Korean passenger ship has entered South Korean waters; and the Asian games marked the first time North Korea participated in an international sports event hosted in South Korea.¹ These firsts, coupled with other recent landmark events—family visits between North and South Koreans, North Korea’s admission to kidnapping Japanese citizens, rail, road and tourism projects spanning the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), to name a few—indicate North Korea’s willingness to pursue more open relations with the world and, in particular, South Korea.^{2,3} Do these events portend an official end to the Korean War and the re-unification of the Korean Peninsula, events of critical interest to the United States? Unfortunately, while these recent milestones are promising, North Korea is pursuing greater contact with South Korea and the rest of the world as a result of its dire economic strait and its need of international support for the regime’s survival.⁴ North Korea is still a threat to the interests of the U.S., and the United States’ current strategy in dealing with the North has failed to eliminate this threat. The United States must therefore take action to prepare to use military force against North Korea to protect its interests.

Which United States’ interests are at such risk as to require the use of military force against North Korea? Clearly, national security is the most important interest at stake. North Korea poses a critical threat to the security of the United States. In fact, North Korea’s export of missiles and missile technologies has earned its inclusion in President George W. Bush’s “axis of evil.”⁵ Even though North Korea, in September 1999, agreed to

suspend its ballistic missile tests, the country now possesses missiles capable of hitting targets as far away as the U.S., not to mention the United States' regional allies, South Korea and Japan.⁶ In August 1998 North Korea "shocked the world by successfully testing a long-range missile. That missile was fired over Japanese territory, sending an unmistakable military warning to Japan and its closest military ally, the U.S."⁷ This three-stage rocket, known as Taepodong 1, contained a satellite intended to broadcast revolutionary hymns while it orbited the earth. Although the satellite failed, the rocket demonstrated North Korea's capability to launch intercontinental ballistic missiles.⁸ Now the North Korean military threat extends right to America's shores.⁹

The North's ballistic missile capability isn't the only military threat to the United States' national security. North Korea's possession of chemical and biological weapons is well documented. Hwang Jang-yop, the highest ranking North Korean official to defect, has revealed details of the North's huge chemical and biological weapons arsenal. He described the North's weapons program as "consisting of 'high-grade' deadly poisons, including nerve agents, blistering agents, and blood agents."¹⁰ The 1994 Agreed Framework nuclear deal purported to prevent North Korea from building nuclear devices; however, in August 1998 U.S. intelligence indicated that North Korea was preparing to cheat on the Framework accord by digging a giant hole in the ground to house a clandestine nuclear facility.¹¹ In fact, North Korea recently acknowledged "it has been secretly developing nuclear weapons for years in violation of international agreements and has built 'more powerful weapons.'"¹² The U.S. intelligence community has assessed that the North may currently have one or two nuclear weapons.¹³ North Korea's possession of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), to include ballistic missiles, threatens not only Northeast Asia but other regions as well. In fact, North Korea in 1999 sold between 25 and 50 ballistic missiles to several foreign countries.¹⁴ The cash-strapped North Korean

government may well be selling chemical, biological or nuclear weapons to rogue countries or terrorist organizations—if so, this situation represents a clear and immediate threat to U.S. security.

North Korea's 1.5 million-man army adds yet another dimension to this military threat to U.S. national security. The conventional military threat posed by North Korean forces on the peninsula is long-standing.¹⁵ Even as its economy has contracted over the past decade "Pyongyang has committed scarce resources to its military, strengthening its position along the DMZ.... The military remains the top North Korean priority."¹⁶ Coupled to its military capability is the North's intent to employ those forces. North Korea has, in the past, made incursions into the South, forcing South Korean and U.S. forces to maintain a high state of readiness. However, unless North Korea is threatened it will probably not take any significant military action, as the North's leader, Kim Chong-il, needs the military to maintain his regime. Still, the continued threat of military conflict in Korea indeed threatens regional stability, U.S. interests abroad, and the security of U.S. personnel stationed in the region.

A second national interest is that of prosperity. The United States has extensive economic ties with countries in Northeast Asia—in particular, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and China. North Korea's military capability poses a threat to the region's vast economic framework—any disruption to this infrastructure will adversely impact the prosperity of the United States. Further, "the North's forward deployed forces require the continued presence of 37,000 US troops in South Korea at a cost of about 3 billion U.S. taxpayer dollars per year."¹⁷ Clearly, this continued military presence drains the U.S. economy and adversely impacts the nation's prosperity. On the other hand, North Korea is a potential market for U.S. investments. A North Korea or a unified Korea with a free market

economy would provide opportunities for the U.S. to expand its economic base within Northeast Asia, hence increasing the prosperity of the United States.

Closely coupled with prosperity is a third national interest—value projection. Of course, the existence of North Korea as a Stalinist dictatorship is an affront to U.S. democratic values. Further, according to Mitchell Reiss, “as worried as the United States is about the North’s strength, it is also concerned about its weakness. A so-called ‘hard landing’ by North Korea would result in enormous human suffering and physical hardship in the North and risk destabilizing the Korean Peninsula and perhaps beyond.”¹⁸ North Korea in the midst of a massive famine and the population is confronted with chronic food shortages; over 300,000 have crossed the Chinese border to seek refuge.¹⁹ The United Nations estimates more than half the North Korean population is malnourished.²⁰ The United States has taken the lead to reduce the suffering of North Koreans by providing food and humanitarian aid. North Korea is now the largest U.S. aid recipient in Asia, “despite periodic North Korean belligerence, provocations, and lack of cooperation.”²¹ Since 1994 Washington has spent over a half a billion dollars on the North in the form of humanitarian food assistance, payments to the North for the return of Korea War-era U.S. MIA remains, and energy assistance required under the 1994 nuclear accord.²² The United States is committed to relieving the hardships and suffering the North Korean population is experiencing; Washington is using its diplomatic tools and economic assistance to project U.S. values into North Korea.

National security, prosperity, value projection—key national interests threatened by or with opportunities presented by North Korea—transpire against the backdrop of the international and domestic environments directly related to the situation on the Korean Peninsula. For North Korea the environment is quite stark—this country is isolated from the rest of the world. North Korea is one of the last communist regimes and arguably the

most closed society today. With his country in shambles, Kim Chong-il has “pursued a controlled opening and not embarked on fundamental systematic change.”²³ It has almost no foreign business presence; telecommunications are primitive, internet use is negligible, and mass media are all government controlled and heavily ideological.²⁴ While isolationist, North Korea significantly influences three of its regional neighbors—South Korea, Japan and China.

While the two Koreas have a long history of contact against a background of hostility and violent acts, the June 2000 Inter-Korean summit meeting was a watershed in South-North relations. The resulting Joint Declaration established a means for engagement between the two countries. To that end, South Korean President Kim Dae Jung’s engagement strategy has centered around three principles: “not to tolerate armed provocation by North Korea, not to attempt a take-over or absorption of North Korea and to broaden reconciliation and cooperation.”²⁵ To date, this policy has elicited limited gestures and assurances from North Korea, and South Koreans are demanding greater reciprocity if they are to continue engaging the North.²⁶

Japan is facing a dilemma in its relationship with North Korea. While Japan favors engagement with North Korea, it is concerned with North Korea’s history and intentions. Japan has offered token amounts of aid to encourage dialogue with the North; however, North Koreans have demanded compensation for Japan’s occupation of the Korean Peninsula. The gradual progress in international relations with North Korea has reinforced the North’s deeply rooted antipathy to Japan; however, the North’s recent overtures to Japan seem to indicate a warming trend in the relationship between the two countries. Still, Japan perceives it is being called upon to politically and financially support international arrangements with North Korea without considering Japan’s concerns,

mainly, the threat posed by the North's ballistic missile and WMD capability and the long-term implications of a re-unified Korea that is anti-Japan.²⁷

China also considers security and stability on the Korean Peninsula critically important to its national interests. The country is seeking to ensure that North Korea's engagement strategy does not undermine those interests. For instance, increased foreign engagement with North Korea decreases China's costly effort to shore up the North Korean regime while increasing stability on the peninsula and supporting China's arguments for a reduced U.S. military presence in Northeast Asia. On the other hand, the Chinese prefer not to undertake a major diplomatic and economic role with North Korea, except for providing food and energy supplies. They already have their hands full dealing with the North Korean refugee problem, as well as confronting the political challenges inherent when North Koreans enter foreign embassies on Chinese soil to request asylum. China is far more interested in developing economic ties with South Korea, and China's deepening relationship with South Korea has alienated the North Korean leadership.²⁸

Russia is yet another regional actor with ties to North Korea. During the Cold War the Soviet Union supported the North politically, economically, and militarily. However, since the Soviet Union's demise Russia has provided minimal support to North Korea. In fact, Russia's primary interaction with the North is permitting North Koreans to live and work in Russia's Far East region.

Indeed, the international environment presents a challenge in developing a strategy to deal with North Korea. An isolated North Korean government has instituted controlled engagement with the rest of the world in hopes of receiving humanitarian aid. South Korea and Japan have responded positively to such engagement while China and Russia prefer more of a hands-off attitude. But what about the domestic environment? Since the Korean War, the United States has considered North Korea an enemy and likely military

foe. The U.S. has committed troops to defend the DMZ, a substantial military and economic commitment. Although President Bush has labeled North Korea as an axis of evil, the Perry Initiative, a Congressionally mandated review of U.S. policy towards the North, concludes the “United States must engage North Korea, live with it, and not hasten its demise.”²⁹ This dichotomy reflects the dilemma the United States faces. On one hand, the U.S. sees the threats to its national security posed by the Korean military, proliferation of ballistic missiles and the existence and possible sale to other countries and terrorist organizations of WMD. Washington believes in the strategic imperative to eliminate these threats. On the other hand, the U.S. is committed to supporting the engagement process with North Korea and providing humanitarian aid to the North Koreans, thereby propping up the North Korean regime. The potential for economic opportunities within North Korea exist, but with the current international engagement strategy these opportunities are limited and primarily controlled by the North.

The confusing domestic environment reflects both the threats and opportunities to U.S. interests on the Korean Peninsula, and establishes the baseline for the nation’s political objectives with respect to North Korea. Clearly, the critical political objective for the United States is to disable North Korea’s military threat. Eliminating the North’s ballistic missiles and WMD capability, as well as removing the threat of armed confrontation on the Korean Peninsula, will bolster the United States’ security. Two other political objectives, re-unifying the Korean Peninsula within a democratic framework and expanding economic opportunities for the United States in the peninsula, support the nation’s prosperity and value projection interests. While a re-unified Korea violates part of South Korea’s engagement policy—and the current engagement strategy of the United States—a separate North Korea with the current totalitarian regime remains a security threat to the U.S. and cannot further U.S. prosperity nor support U.S. value projection on

the peninsula. In fact, permitting North Korea's continued existence flies in the face of the values U.S. citizens cherish. North Korea is "one of the most dictatorial, benightedly repressive regimes on the face of the earth. It is a regime that has killed or let die hundreds of thousands of its own citizens and, over the years, has sponsored horrendous acts of terrorism and criminal behavior."³⁰ A democratic, unified Korea would eliminate the North's regime and encourage the democratic values to the benefit of all Koreans.

Achieving the political objectives outlined above requires the judicious use of the various instruments of U.S. national power. To date the United States has applied several instruments with limited success. Beginning with the Korean War the U.S. has attempted different diplomatic approaches to achieve its political objectives. Washington has encouraged a multi-lateral diplomatic front to encourage changes in North Korea, both through the United Nations and working with its regional allies. Prior to the breakup of the Soviet Union, the United States and its allies attempted to politically isolate North Korea; most countries had no diplomatic ties with the North. Diplomatic discussions were held either through third party channels or under the auspices of the armistice agreement. However, this diplomatic isolation proved ineffective since the North relied upon the Soviet Union and China for support.

In the 1990s this diplomatic isolation did in fact impact North Korea. Diplomatic and cultural exchanges with North Korea were almost non-existent; the North was considered a pariah state. Even China placed North Korea on the backburner to pursue closer relations with South Korea. To regain contact with the rest of the world and survive, North Korea was forced to make diplomatic overtures to South Korea, Japan and the United States. Surprisingly, these overtures have led to increased diplomatic interchanges with North Korea, to include family visits between the North and South, and admissions of past sins—in particular, Japan's admittance of atrocities committed during World War II and North

Korea's confession of abducting Japanese citizens. In addition, the diplomatic dialogue led to the 1994 nuclear weapons accord.

However, this diplomatic instrument has failed to achieve the United States' political objectives—eliminating North Korea as a military threat, re-unifying and democratizing the Korean Peninsula, and expanding the economic opportunities for the US on the peninsula. North Korea has permitted only a controlled opening of its diplomatic channels and has in fact negated the use of diplomatic isolation as an instrument of power. Hence, the United States and its allies have moved to the opposite end of the diplomatic instrument to attempt change in North Korea; that is, active engagement with North Korea. Engagement has taken many forms—recently, diplomatic exchanges between North Korea and Japan, South Korea and the US. have occurred at the highest government levels; such agreements as the nuclear and Inter-Korean accords have been signed; cultural exchanges have occurred.³¹ Could expanding the engagement strategy achieve the political objectives of the United States? Establishing full diplomatic relations with North Korea, including the country in international forums, applying favored nation trade status to the North, furthering cultural exchanges, expanding accords between countries, encouraging the Chinese to engage with the North could all be diplomatic engagements to achieve the desired political objectives. Unfortunately, recent events indicate Kim Chong-il will only permit those diplomatic engagements that do not place his regime at risk. The United States and its allies cannot employ the diplomatic instrument of power to eliminate the North Korean military establishment nor re-unify the Korean peninsula. At most, this instrument can only succeed in continuing diplomatic exchanges, encouraging limited economic opportunities in North Korea and providing humanitarian aid to the North Korean population.

Similarly, the economic instrument of power has had limited impact on North Korea. Even though most of the world has limited economic ties with North Korea, the country has managed to survive. Prior to the 1990s North Korea relied on the Soviet Union and China for economic support; after the collapse of the Soviet Union North Korea found itself in dire economic straits. Faced with a shrinking economy and famine the North opened its diplomatic channels in a bid for foreign aid. With the U.S. in lead, some 47 nations now provide humanitarian aid to North Korea.^{32, 33} At the same time such rogue nations as Iran and Iraq have purchased missiles and missile technologies from North Korea, infusing the North with much needed cash. North Korea, in an effort to mirror China's market economy reform path, hired a Chinese businessman, Yang Bin, to manage a new economic zone in the border city of Siniuju. While this area will "be a totally capitalist region" it will have a wall erected around it to separate the area from the rest of North Korea.³⁴ Unfortunately, on October 4, 2002, China arrested Yang Bin, thus throwing the North's plans for the Sinuiju region into chaos.³⁵ In addition, South Korean businesses, spearheaded by the former Hyundai Group, are negotiating with the North for an industrial zone in the North-South border city of Kaesong.³⁶ Finally, Kim Jong-il recently visited Russia to enhance economic ties with that country by offering to export North Korean workers to Russia's Far East. By sending workers to Russia the North can moderate the effects of its food shortage because North Korea would have fewer people to feed and the workers can funnel food and funds back to the government.³⁷ These economic ventures are controlled actions to infuse capital into North Korea, again without inducing change to the current political regime.

Could a well-coordinated multilateral economic strategy achieve the desired political objectives? At first glance it appears economic isolation forced changes within North Korea—perhaps the U.S. and its allies could employ economic sanctions or rewards to

meet the political objectives. One option could be to tie humanitarian and economic aid to the critical objective—that is, WMD and missile destruction. However, Kim Jong-il relies on his military to maintain his regime; as such he would never willingly dismantle his power base. Since rogue nations and terrorist organizations are eager to acquire North Korean military systems and technologies the North could probably offset lost aid through the sale of missiles and other military systems. More frightening would be the possibility that using aid as a reward or sanction could force Kim Chong-il to sell WMD to those rogue nations and terrorists. Hence, this economic instrument could easily backfire. Further, the North Korean populace would be the casualties of an aid reward or sanction policy—history has shown that Kim Chong-il will sacrifice his citizens to preserve his regime.

The economic instrument, like the diplomatic instrument of power, fails to achieve the stated political objectives, leaving the use of military force as the last possible viable instrument of national power. Before the United States can use military force to attain its political objectives, a strategic analysis is required to determine if military operations are appropriate. Such an analysis first must examine the military strategic setting. Given the current political environment, any military operation against North Korea must be multilateral. Obviously, the United States must ally with South Korea; Japan must also be a member of a coalition force if the U.S. is to use bases on Japanese soil. Ideally, although not a necessary condition, the operation should have United Nations blessing and support. UN support would certainly add more legitimacy to the use of military force; however, unless the United States has conducted coalition operations with offered forces, these forces may be more of a hindrance than a help. Support from Russia, again not necessary, would be advantageous, particularly for its position in the UN Security Council as well as its location for potential logistics and operations bases. Finally, China's approval and support is critical to the success of any military operation against North

Korea. The ideal solution would be to conduct operations with China as a coalition partner. As a minimum, China must secure its border with North Korea and not allow any material or personnel to pass through the border region.

Potentially, China could see U.S. action against North Korea sufficiently threatening for it to ally with the North, similar to the situation during the Korean War. However, in this case the U.S., at the outset, would actively engage with the Chinese, convince them of the necessity to conduct military operations against the North, encourage the Chinese to join the allies, and reassure them the U.S. is not a threat to China.

North Korea, on the other hand, would be on its own during a military campaign against the United States and its allies. Since North Korea is isolated from the rest of the world it cannot expect support from any other country—particularly if the United Nations sanctions the military operations. Given this situation, the allies cannot assume the North Koreans would behave in a rational manner. In other words, while the allies would consider this to be a limited, conventional war, the North Koreans would be fighting for the very existence of their country and might therefore use all military capabilities at their disposal. Hence, the resulting war, from the North Korean perspective, would be an all-out war, to include the use of WMD. World opinion would preclude the allies from responding in kind; while the allies could not use WMD they must prepare to defend themselves against those types of weapons.

Similarly, to preserve their country as long as possible the North would probably revert to guerrilla warfare in addition to employing their special operations forces to disrupt allied logistics and command and control infrastructure. The North would want to drag the war into a long and protracted affair, as opposed to the allies' desire to conclude the war as quickly as possible. The allies would also need to maintain the initiative during the war, choosing the time and place for all operations.

The need for a quick victory underscores the primary center of gravity for the U.S. and its allies: the will of the people. For South Koreans, their government is an equally important center of gravity as the war's success necessitates the South to retain a viable government. To defeat the allies, then, North Korea's military objective must be to inflict as much damage to the allies' military forces while protracting the conflict as long as possible. If the North can make the allies' war effort too painful the coalition would undoubtedly collapse. The United States would then be faced with continuing an increasing costly and unpopular war and would eventually confront a situation similar to Vietnam. Like South Vietnam, if the US extracts itself from this conflict the South Koreans would find themselves isolated, while the North Koreans would gain the initiative to attack the South's center of gravity, its government.

The North has two centers of gravity: its political leadership and its military; however, the military is probably the primary center of gravity. Since the North Korean leadership relies on its military to maintain its power, eliminating the North's military as an effective fighting force would probably result in the government's collapse. On the other hand, eliminating the government may not cause the North's military to collapse; hence, the allies must eliminate both centers of gravity.

Clearly, then, the military objectives for the United States and its allies are to eliminate both the North Korean leadership and its military forces. Specifically, the allies must capture or kill the North's government leaders, in particular, Kim Jong-il and his advisors. Further, the allies must destroy or neutralize the North's ballistic missiles and WMD as well as destroying the North's capability to produce such weapons. Finally, the allies must destroy the North's military as an effective fighting force, to include its leadership, command and control, and logistics capabilities. These military objectives directly relate to the political objectives. If the allies achieve the military objectives, North

Korea's military threat is eliminated, with the North's regime disposed and the Korean Peninsula united under a democratic South Korean government. The way is then open for the United States to expand its economic opportunities in the peninsula. The war termination criteria are then North Korea's unconditional surrender and abdication of the regime's government.

Given this criteria, the post-conflict conditions in North Korea would be dismal, and the allies must prepare massive re-building program. Of course, the South Koreans would assume leadership of the united Korean Peninsula, and, to that end, must develop a capability to govern throughout the peninsula. The allies must provide substantial humanitarian aid to the entire Korean population; the war would devastate both the Northern and Southern portions of Korea. Further, the allies must assist, both financially and materially, to re-build the Korean infrastructure—homes, roads, rail, communications, factories. Finally, the allies must fully embrace a unified Korea diplomatically and integrate the country into the world's diplomatic and economic environments.

Are the stated military objectives feasible enough to achieve such an end state? An objective comparison of North Korea's and the allies' military forces can help determine the feasibility of the objectives. The North has a potent army—1.5 million active duty personnel with 4.7 million reservists. Its arsenal of tanks, armored personnel carriers, artillery, rockets, short range missiles, and other equipment is overwhelming. However, the arsenal's age, quality, and reliability is questionable considering the North's economic status. The North's forces are forward deployed and well protected, with a vast underground network of complexes to frustrate the allies' planning. North Korea also possesses a potent air force, designed primarily for ground attack support, but fields numerous air interdiction and air to air superiority aircraft as well. The North has a small navy; however, its submarines can play havoc with the allies' naval forces. North Korea

has very capable special operations forces; they would be a factor in the allies' defense of their interior lines. Finally, the North possesses long range ballistic missiles, as well as chemical, biological and nuclear weapons. This capability would constrain the allies' freedom of movement and would dictate tactical operations, requiring a substantial portion of allied force to eliminate those weapons.

North Korea would face overwhelming forces in a conflict against the United States and its allies. South Korea's forces, while smaller than the North's, are potent. The army and air forces, like the North, are well-trained. But the South's equipment is modern and well maintained. South Korea's small navy is trained to interdict the North's submarine force and to neutralize the North's other naval vessels, to include its special operations boats. South Korea would also rely on the United States' military juggernaut. To ensure complete victory, the U.S. must employ all conventional forces at its disposal, land, air, space, and sea. The U.S. military is unequaled in quality; this quality should compensate for any North Korean numerical superiority. To defeat the North's guerrilla activities, the U.S. must employ its aggressive special operations forces. Any other ally's military force would compliment the United States and South Korean forces and help to offset the North's numerical advantage. If China chooses to provide military forces to the coalition, the allies' force structure would improve drastically. China's huge military would ensure overwhelming numerical superiority for the allies; while China's military equipment is not as advanced as the United States, China's arsenal is better than North Korea's. Finally, China's partnership in the coalition would require the North to fight a two-front war, something the North Korean military forces are not prepared for.

Assuming that while China supports the allies' objectives but does not provide military forces to the coalition, North Korea's military forces would initially have the advantage in terms of numerical superiority and force disposition. However, the allies'

technological superiority and quality weapons would provide them with the upper hand provided they execute a sound military strategy. This allied strategy must consider North Korea's strategy while effectively employing allied force to achieve the military objectives. North Korea's strategy would probably be a massive pre-emptive invasion of South Korea resulting from a real or perceived threat to the North's security. The North Koreans have planned and exercised for such a conflict for 50 years; their forces are deployed to conduct operations with very short notice. Not only would the North unleash its massive military over the border to first take Seoul and then rapidly move down the peninsula, it would simultaneously launch its special operations forces to disrupt the South Korean and U.S. response. An unknown factor is the North's use of long range ballistic missiles against Japan and possibly China and the United States. Equally unknown is the North's use of WMD. The allied military strategy must assume North Korea would indeed employ both the missiles and WMD.

To counteract the North's strategy the allies must build a strategy to blunt the North's invasion and use of missiles and WMD. To this end, the strategy must consider UN and coalition approval of military operations would be contingent upon a North Korean pre-emptive strike; the UN would not condone an allied pre-emptive strike. Hence, the allied strategy would be broken down into four phases: pre-hostilities, initial North Korean invasion, counter attack and termination. During pre-hostilities, the allies must place the South Korean and U.S. forces in country on alert; Japanese and Chinese forces must also be on alert. The allies must also mobilize their forces outside South Korea and begin staging them into country. In particular, air and naval forces must be positioned for rapid response. This show of force would demonstrate the allies' resolve and could possibly convince the North to concede to the allies' political objectives.

However, like the political and economic instruments, this show of force would unlikely alter North Korea's agenda. Instead, the North would perceive the allies' mobilization as threatening its security, and North Korea's response would be to invade the South. The allies' in-place forces must absorb the North's invasion, relying on defense in depth to slow down the North Korean forces. While the North Koreans would seize the initiative during this second phase of the war, the allies must commit resources to seek out and destroy the North's ballistic missiles and WMD. The allies cannot pursue their military objectives during the war's first two phases, with the exception of interdicting the North's known missile and WMD sites. They, would, however, do so during the war's third phase—the primary military objective being the destruction of the North Korean military. By this time the allies should have in theater all available resources to gain the initiative and dictate the course of the war. The allies must devote sufficient resources to destroy the North's missile and WMD capability, thereby eliminating this threat and expanding allied forces' freedom of movement. Special operations forces must proactively neutralize any burgeoning North Korean guerrilla operations. The war's fourth phase would begin once the majority of the North's military forces have been eliminated. During this final phase the allies can concentrate on achieving the second military objective, that of eliminating the North Korean leadership. Successful conclusion of the fourth phase of the war would occur when the allies have achieved both military objectives.

Achieving the military objectives would result in the United States and its allies achieving two of their three political objectives: eliminating the North Korean military threat and re-unifying the Korean Peninsula within a democratic framework. Use of the military instrument of power would also provide the United States with the opportunity to achieve the final political objective, that of expanding economic opportunities for the United States in the peninsula. Without a doubt, achieving the military objectives would come at a very

high cost to the Koreans, the United States and its allies. War would devastate the Korean Peninsula; the armed forces of the U.S. and its allies would absorb significant casualties and lose valuable equipment. The most serious risks to the military strategy would occur during the second and third phases of the war. During the North's invasion, the allies would face a very real risk of not stopping the North's onslaught before sufficient allied forces can be brought to bear, and the allies could potentially lose control of the entire Korean Peninsula. A significant risk during the war's third phase would be for the North to succeed in marshalling enough military force to protect its leadership and protract the war long enough and make it so costly the coalition would collapse. A final risk during both phases would be the potential failure of the allies to seek out and destroy the North's ballistic missile and WMD arsenal.

However, assuming the allies can overcome these risks, the allies should fully support the strategic concept, particularly given UN support. With the allies' full commitment, North Korea should not be able to defeat the allies' strategic concept. During the war's four phases the allies can employ their intelligence assets to assess the war's progress and the degradation of the North Korean forces. The allied leadership can then make appropriate changes to the operational conduct of the war and ensure the military objectives would be successfully achieved. In the same vein, frequent and accurate intelligence assessments can determine if the allies' strategic concept is failing and provide the opportunity for the allied leadership to reassess not only the military but the political objectives. Still, assuming the allies can overcome the risks to this strategic concept, the likely outcome of employing the military instrument of power would be for the United States and its allies to successfully achieve their political objectives.

Using the military instrument of power to achieve political objectives is indeed a draconian measure. However, the North Koreans have repeatedly demonstrated their

ability to use the political and economic instruments to their meet their own agenda. North Korea poses a grave threat to the security and prosperity of the United States and its regional allies, particularly South Korea and Japan. Some claim North Korea is not the United States' problem. In fact, according to Edward Timperlake and William Triplett II, "It is their [China's] job, not the Americans', to ensure that their client state, North Korea, does not pose a threat to anyone, inside or outside the region. North Korea is their problem, not our, and they have to solve it..."³⁸ Unfortunately, this view is far too shortsighted. North Korea threatens the interests of the United States, and the U.S. must take action to protect itself, as well as its allies. Since the current political and economic initiatives have failed to eliminate this threat, the United States must prepare to employ the military instrument of power to secure its national interests.

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